

## ***Battle of New Orleans – Post-Visit Activities***

### **Artistic Impressions of the Battle of New Orleans**

**Objectives:** Students will examine two primary documents depicting the Battle of New Orleans, and make connections between the images, and what they observed visiting the battlefield. Students will gain an appreciation for how perceptions of the battle changed throughout time.

#### **Resources Needed:**

Magafan, Ethel. “Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. Tempra on wood. 1943. Recorder of Deeds building; Washington, D.C.

Yeager, Joseph. “Battle of New Orleans and the Death of Major General Pakenham.” (sic) Engraving. 1816.

“Artistic Impressions of the Battle of New Orleans: a document-based question” worksheet

#### **Background:**

Document A is an engraving by Joseph Yeager that appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper in 1816. This presents a fictitious view of the battlefield, with the death of British Major General Pakenham at the center, and the homogenous American and British troops battling at a distance in the background. Although this image was published about a year after the battle was over, most readers would not have known what the battle looked like, and some might not have known that it took place at all.

Document B is a WPA mural painted in 1943 by Ethel Magafan for the Recorder of Deeds archives building in Washington, D.C. and is part of a larger collection of original works of art honoring African American contributions to history. Although the image correctly depicts the many diverse groups of people who joined the American cause in defense of the city of New Orleans, including free men of color and slaves, it inaccurately portrays the events of the battle, and also inaccurately portrays the layout of the battlefield.

#### **Activity:**

Have students examine and compare the two documents. Have students complete worksheet to facilitate making connections between the images, and their experiences of visiting the battlefield. Discuss student observations as a class.

#### **Enrichment Activity:**

Based on their experiences of visiting the battlefield, and the images they have studied, have students create their own image of the Battle of New Orleans. What aspect of the battle is the most important to highlight? Is it important to represent the battle exactly as we believe it occurred? Who is the intended audience for this image? How does that affect how it is shaped?

## **Breaking News!**

**Objectives:** Students will examine a newspaper editorial analyzing the Battle of New Orleans, printed shortly after the battle was over. Students will compare this with a modern newspaper editorial and will have an opportunity to create their own.

### **Resources:**

Clipping from the (New York) *Albany Gazette*; February 9, 1815

A modern, local newspaper with an editorial section

Discussion questions cards

### **Background:**

This editorial clipping appeared on the last page of the four-page *Albany Gazette*, printed February 9, 1815. At this time, people and news traveled slowly, and so it was not unusual for a newspaper to print news from around the world weeks, months, and sometimes even years after the events took place. The breaking news of the American victory at New Orleans in this newspaper is reported in a short section and added to the last page as a postscript, likely because the news came late in the week after the first three pages had been printed. Each letter that appeared on the page needed to be set by hand, and every page had to be printed individually by hand as well. For this reason, newspapers were rarely longer than four pages and usually printed no more than weekly.

One of the most important legacies of the Battle of New Orleans is that it changed the way that the world viewed the United States and the way that Americans viewed themselves. The Battle of New Orleans was a major American military victory and proved not only to Americans but to the world that the United States was a mighty nation and that its experiment with democracy was a worthy one.

### **Activity:**

Part 1: Have students read the short editorial section. In small groups or as a class, examine the article and answer the discussion questions. This editorial, instead of primarily presenting information, expresses an opinion about the importance of the Battle of New Orleans and the strength of the United States over Great Britain. How does this editorial compare to written texts that the students are familiar with?

Part 2: Have students read a news article in the newspaper, or have students research to familiarize themselves with a current issue in the news. Have the students identify the most important piece of information related to this issue or event – whether it is opinion or fact – by writing it on a card. Then, have students write a short persuasive editorial to convey this important meaning to readers.

***Artistic Impressions of the Battle of New Orleans:  
a document-based question activity***

*Examine document A and document B. Both documents show important events of the Battle of New Orleans. Document A is an engraving which appeared in an American newspaper not long after the war was over. Document B is a large wall painting completed over 100 years after the battle was over, in a government building in Washington, D.C.*

Describe the scene in Document A. What do you see happening in this picture? What observations can you make about the people who fought in the Battle of New Orleans based on this scene?

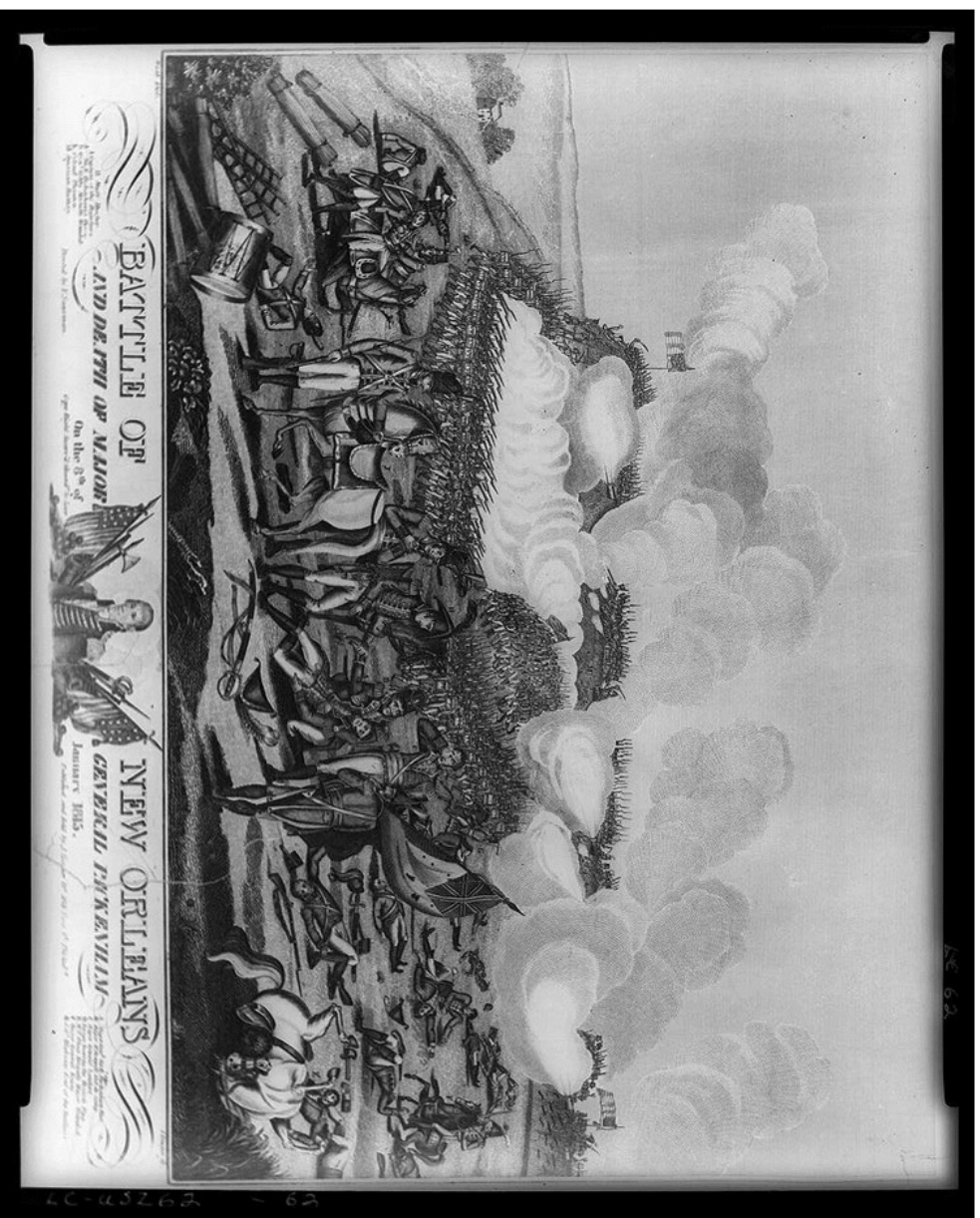
Describe the scene in Document B. What do you see happening in this picture? What observations can you make about the people who fought in the Battle of New Orleans based on this scene?

What similarities or differences do you see when you compare how the soldiers are shown in the documents?

Based on your observations of the documents and what you have learned about the Battle of New Orleans from your visit, how accurate are these images of the event that took place at the Chalmette plantation on January 8, 1815? What do you see that is correct? What do you see that isn't?

Pick one of the images to write about. Why do you think the artist depicted this image the way that they did? Was there a message about the battle they were trying to get across? If so, what?

Document A



(Library of Congress)

"Battle of New Orleans and the Death of Major General Packenham" engraving by Joseph Yeager  
Printed in 1816.

Document B



(Library of Congress)

“Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans” by Ethel Magafan  
Painted in 1943.

# POSTSCRIPT.

## IMPORTANT

### Victory at N. Orleans

Loss of the British from 1500 to 2000 men in killed, wounded and prisoners ; among the former their Com. in Chief, Lt. Gen. Pakenham, and several other General Officers.

*From the Evening Post, of February 6.*

NEW-ORLEANS — We congratulate the American people on the important intelligence with which our columns of this evening are proudly adorned. The British army have now been taught, that when our country is invaded by an enemy, Americans will never stop to enquire, at such a time, who is the foe, or what the cause of the war. They hold their soil too sacred to be polluted by any hostile foot whatever, and animated with one spirit, they will rush forward with or without arms in their hands, to repel the ruthless invader.

At such a time, on such an occasion, the subject ennobles any cause, and inspires a courage that is almost superhuman. If as invaders we are but *as other men*, invaded, we are invincible.

The consequence of this repulse is, the saving of millions of property to the merchants of this state, and the states of New-England.

adorned: decorated

enquire: ask questions

arms: weapons



**Who is the intended audience of this editorial? Does the editorial say anything specific that only people of that audience would understand?**

**What is the most important information that this editorial conveys? Is this in your opinion the most important fact there is to know about the battle? Why do you think the author felt this piece of information was so important?**

**What is the opinion expressed by this editorial? Is the author in favor of or against the outcome of the Battle of New Orleans?**

**What is the purpose of this editorial? Does it persuade the reader? Does it provide information? Does it help the reader think about the event in a different way?**